equipments etc. for preparing a medal winning team in Athletics, Aquatics (Diving), Archery, Boxing, Weightlifting, Shooting, Wrestling, Equestrian, Sailing and Rowing. Training of sports persons, selected by the Army, has already started in various Sports centres.

Export of Defence Equipments

2109. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any agreement has been reached between India and Russia, regarding export of defence equipment manufactured in India under licence from Russia;

(b) whether Government has explored the demand of such defence equipment;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the details of such defence equipments exported/to be exported by India to various countries?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) India and Russia have signed a protocol that export of defence equipment manufactured in India under licence from Russia, to third countries will be considered on a case by case basis.

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited has exported MIG 21 spares/services to 17 countries under agreements.

Safety at Defence Depots

2110. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the spate of blasts and fire at various defence depots and research centres have been due to human errors;

(b) whether Government and army officials undertake regular visits and checks the safety measures in such centres and depots;

(c) when was the last time such inspection was conducted and the number of such inspections conducted by (a) Government Officials, (b) Army Officials in a year; and

(d) what was the report of the last inspection in terms of Safety norms followed in these centres and depots?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) The fire incidents, which have occurred at Ordnance Depots, have been investigated. Probable causes of fire in the Ordnance Depots, on analysis of past cases, are as under:-

(i) Fires due to spontaneous combustion.

(ii) Electrical Short-circuit.

(iii) Accidental explosions during testing/repair/breakdown of ammunition. However, human element had not been ruled out.

(b) and (c) Annual Technical Inspections of depots is carried out on yearly basis. Last inspections were conducted during 2001. In addition, local inspections under the aegis of Formation Commander/Depot Commandants are conducted as per schedule. Regarding research centres, Centre for Environment & Explosive Safety (CEES) undertakes annual visit to the research centres maintained by Defence Researach Development Organisation (DRDO), Directorate General of Ordnance Factory (DGOF), Directorate General of Quality Assurance (DGQA) and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) and points out the measures to improve safety.

(d) During inspection it is ensured that prescribed safety norms are being followed and implemented by the laboratories/establishments. The inspecting officers have reported about deficiency of equipment and manpower in depots on which necessary action has been taken. The implementation of the report in respect of the research centres is ensured through periodical reports.

Engagement of Sanitary staff on private contract basis

2111. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Secunderabad Cantonment Board is engaging sanitary staff on private contract basis;

(b) if so, whether this system is working efficiently to serve a large section of civilian population; and

(c) if not, whether Government propose to give any direction to the cantonment Board to replace this private contract system by permanent sanitary staff?